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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 14 March 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

While all efforts are being exerted, at the international and regional levels and at the national level in Palestine, to foster an environment conducive to the opening of a serious political horizon that will allow for accelerated pursuit and achievement of a peaceful, just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to pursue illegal policies that are totally contradictory to these efforts and undermining the extremely fragile situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

More Palestinian civilians have regrettably lost their lives as a result of the brutality of the Israeli occupying forces, including the Israeli settlers, who are constantly committing violations and grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, against the Palestinian people. On 12 March, a 25-year-old Palestinian, Mahmoud Adel Faris Al-Teiti, was shot in the head and killed by the occupying forces during a military raid on Al-Fawwar refugee camp near Al-Khalil. This cold-blooded killing sparked further outrage and demonstrations at the brutality of the occupying Power, which continues to attack unarmed civilians with lethal weaponry, in total disregard for human life. Israel again responded with excessive force against the demonstrations, including with tear gas and steel-coated rubber bullets.

This killing was preceded by the killing of a 28-year-old Palestinian man, Zeid Ali Rayyan, by an Israeli settler. Mr. Rayyan tragically died on 12 March of injuries sustained when he was run over by the settler near the illegal settlement of "Barqan", west of Salfit. Also, another young Palestinian 22-year-old Muhammad Asfour, died on 7 March of injuries sustained, including a bullet to the head, on 23 February when he was shot by the occupying forces during the suppression of a civilian protest in the village of Abboud. His funeral, on 8 March, witnessed more force by the Israeli army, which clashed with civilians in the funeral procession, causing several injuries. Also, on 7 March, the occupying forces fired tear gas and

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stun grenades injuring journalists covering a protest demanding the release of hunger-striking prisoners, which was taking place outside the "Ofer" prison near Ramallah.

In this connection, I wish to draw your attention to the continuing grave plight of Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike in protest of their unlawful detention by Israel, the occupying Power, without charge. Mr. Samer Issawi is in critical health and is declining rapidly as he has continued his more than 220-day strike in protest of his administrative detention and has begun to refuse even water. We call for international attention to his plight, one that underscores the plight of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails whose rights are being so egregiously violated by the occupying Power, and call for efforts to save his life.

Moreover, I regret to inform you that Israel continues with its arrest campaign throughout Palestine, leading to the detention and imprisonment of many more Palestinian civilians, including children. Today, the Israeli occupying forces carried out numerous raids throughout the West Bank and arrested more than 30 Palestinians. Last week, overnight Israeli raids resulted in the arrest of 14 Palestinians on 6 March, including youths and a journalist, and the arrest of 10 Palestinians on 11 March, in addition to the daily arrest and detention of other civilians.

I wish to draw attention in this regard to the plight of the more than 200 Palestinian children being held captive in Israeli jails. A United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) report released on 6 March 2013 ("Children in Israeli Military Detention: Observations and Recommendations") highlighted the pattern of institutionalized abuse and ill-treatment, including torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, to which Palestinian children are subjected to during their arrest, transfer, interrogation, sentencing and detention by the occupying Power. This includes blindfolding, abduction from their homes in the middle of the night, solitary confinement, threats of death, physical violence and sexual assault against themselves or a family member, no family members or lawyers present during interrogation, removal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory to prisons inside Israel, and military trials, in violation of the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and human rights law. The report also underscores that Israel's juvenile military court, established for trial and prosecution of Palestinian children, is the first and only juvenile military court in operation in the world.

UNICEF has rightly called on Israel to, inter alia, treat Palestinian children in its custody in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international legal standards, and stressed throughout the report that the arrest, detention and imprisonment of a child should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest period of time, not in the systematic, gross manner used by Israel against Palestinian children, and that the prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment is universal and absolute.

We underscore this prohibition and stress that the short- and long-term psychological and social impacts of these illegal Israeli practices on Palestinian children are vast and gravely affect their families, their reintegration into society, their healthy development and their education, among other things. We reiterate our calls for the release of all Palestinian children in Israeli captivity in addition to our

ongoing calls for the release of all Palestinian prisoners and detainees and respect for their human rights. We further call on the international community, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and all other relevant United Nations organs and specialized agencies, to uphold their responsibilities in this regard in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions and to act to bring an end to all such Israeli violations and crimes against the Palestinian people.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 457 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 25 February 2013 (A/ES-10/584-S/2013/128), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations